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Volume 60

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**Fun Fact:**

Any modern jet is capable of breaking the sound barrier.



Randall Brennan's

# NEWSLETTER

**Creating curb appeal on a budget**

(ARA) - The arrival of summer has many homeowners outside planting, preparing the patio for cookouts, and taking evening strolls through the neighborhood. Often, this extended outdoor time brings on a desire to improve a home's curb appeal.

But home improvement projects can be expensive, and many homeowners are still wary about spending money on renovations, despite the improving real estate market. So what's the best way to spruce up the appearance of your house without breaking the bank?

There are many budget-friendly exterior changes that will make a big difference in curb appeal. A fresh coat of paint can work wonders, whether it's applied to the entire house or just on the front door. If your house is painted a neutral color like white or cream, be adventurous and try an energizing red or soothing aqua on your front door; the pop of color will add appealing interest.

While a landscaping overhaul can be very expensive, window boxes or planters are an easy and cost-effective way to add natural beauty to your home's facade. Learn how to build a container garden that will provide extra dimension and color to a front porch or patio.

Take a look at your house from the street. Do your windows look bare? Try adding shutters, but make sure they are appropriately sized. Buying shutters that are smaller than the windows they flank is an all-too-common mistake homeowners make, which leads to the windows looking disproportionately small.

Of all these budget-friendly improvement projects, a new garage door will give you the best return on your investment and provide the most value for your home. Over the last few years, surveys conducted by the Remodeling Cost vs. Value Report indicate that installing new garage doors has been the project moving up the most in the rankings.

So don't let budget constraints keep you from improving the appearance of your home's exterior. There are many low-cost changes that can be made that have a big impact on how your home looks. The summer is a great time to get outside and focus on curb appeal.

- Courtesy of ARA Content

## Word of the Month:

Studies have shown that your income and wealth is directly related to the depth of your Vocabulary. Here is this month's word so you can impress your friends.

### adroit:

\uh-DROIT\ *adjective*;

1. Cleverly skillful, resourceful, or ingenious.

### Example:

He knows that Jory is handsome, talented, and most of all, adroit. Bart is not adroit at anything but pretending.

-- V.C. Andrews, *If There Be Thorns*

### Quotes to Live by:

"I have never in my life learned anything from any man who agreed with me."

--By Dudley Field Malone

### Say What?

#### A Picture Paints a Thousand Words:

A visual presentation is far more descriptive than words.

## Think of lighting as art for your home

(ARA) - Lighting is possibly the most powerful tool you have when it comes to interior design. It does not make sense to invest in beautiful furniture, rugs, paintings and accessories if they are in the dark. The perfect light fixture not only illuminates a space - it is also a beautiful, decorative design element.

"When looking for a light fixture, think of yourself as a curator looking for a perfect piece of art," says interior designer Laurie Smith, known for her role as a featured designer on the hit television show *Trading Spaces* (2000-2008). Smith says, "Like art, a fabulous fixture can make a strong design statement, as well as provide illumination for your space."

Often consumers do not realize the difference updated lighting can make in their homes. Smith suggests finding one special piece and building a room around it. "In design school, we learned that lighting is the most exciting and mysterious medium in design. Lighting is sculptural; it's textural, it's exciting," she says.

"There are so many varying styles and designs in lighting today that the possibilities are endless. Different materials and shapes are just part of what goes into determining that perfect fixture," says Smith. "For instance, do you want the shape of your piece to contrast with your room's schematic or coordinate with it? Taking a traditional fixture and placing it into a modern setting creates interest through contrast, while taking a sleek modern fixture and putting it into a traditional setting infuses new vitality and a sophisticated accent."

With so many choices on the market, the task of selecting a light fixture can be difficult and overwhelming for many homeowners. It's just a matter of developing a plan or one idea. To help consumers get started, Smith talks about the importance of lighting to interior design in a new video series. Each minute-long video, created by the American Lighting Association, focuses on a different aspect of lighting and ways to incorporate it into every homeowner's design plan.

The videos can be viewed on the ALA website at [www.AmericanLightingAssoc.com](http://www.AmericanLightingAssoc.com).

- Courtesy of ARA Content

**Movie Trivia:** What movie won the first Oscar for the new category of Best Animated Feature Film?

- a. *The Incredibles* (2004)
- b. *Shrek* (2001)
- c. *Toy Story* (1995)
- d. *WALL-E* (2008)

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**Would you like to know how much your neighbor's home listed for?**

Maybe you're just curious. Or maybe you want to know how much equity you have in your home. Or perhaps you are thinking of selling soon and want to know how much your home increased in value. Either way, I can help...No "sales pitches" or runarounds. Just give me a call **303-909-2365** and I will give you the facts.

**Economy at a Glance:**

Data Series	May 2012	Jun 2012	Jul 2012
<a href="#"><u>Unemployment Rate</u></a>	8.2	8.2	N/A
<a href="#"><u>Change in Payroll Employment</u></a>	77	80	N/A
<a href="#"><u>Average Hourly Earnings</u></a>	23.44	23.50	N/A
<a href="#"><u>Consumer Price Index</u></a>	-0.3	0.0	N/A
<a href="#"><u>Producer Price Index</u></a>	-1.0	0.1	N/A

Information from <http://www.bls.gov/eag/eag.us.htm>

**US Population Clock**  
314,078,041  
**World Population Clock**  
7,030,246,256

-August 2, 2011

**Home furnishings that will stand the test of time**

(ARA) - Shopping for home furnishings and accessories can be a rewarding experience, but it can also drain your wallet. So when it's time to find just the right items to furnish or just brighten up your home, you want to get it right the first time, because most of us don't have the luxury to toss out all our purchases in a couple of years and start from scratch. So how do you know if that couch or lamp is going to stand the test of time?

Look for something that is built well, like good quality tables that are a little bit older and not mass manufactured," says Claren Pappo, an Interior Design instructor at The Illinois Institute of Art - Tinley Park. Depending on your decor, antiques may be your best bet.

Color is also important when thinking about the longevity of your future. "Big furniture pieces like sofas and side chairs need to be in a neutral color scheme," recommends Daniela Kohl, Interior Design program coordinator at The Art Institute of Indianapolis. You don't want bright colors that you tire of quickly or can fall out of fashion.

At the office: A great way to grab some energy and get through the afternoon lull is to do a simple, yet effective exercise. Using a sturdy, non-rolling desk chair, practice standing up and then sitting back down. Focusing on your legs and keeping your arms to your side, this easy exercise is fast, effective and great for the lower body. Complete two sets of 15 repetitions to provide the burn you need to feel good.

Accessories, like throw pillows, can be trendier with the latest colors because they are much easier and less expensive to replace. But when it comes to lighting, you may want to splurge on something that is both functional and decorative. "Invest in great lamps; they can stand the test of time," says Pappo.

Artwork can really make your home fit your personality, and if you buy something you really like, you'll only grow to appreciate it more over time. "Artwork has great bang for the buck," says Carter. "Go to your local art district or art walk, find an artist you really like and buy their piece."

Finally, Pappo recommends considering how often you'll be moving around. "Think about the flexibility of your furniture and whether the pieces you've chosen will work in another home with a different floor plan."

-Courtesy of ARA Content-

## Food Fact:

- It takes 12 honeybees to produce one tablespoon of honey.

- An apple, when fresh, is made up of about 25% air

## Weird Laws:

*Kentucky*- Every citizen is required by law to shower once a year.

*Georgia*- It is illegal to keep a donkey in a bathtub.

*Nevada*- It is against the law to pawn your dentures in Las Vegas.

*Arizona*- It is illegal to hunt camels

## U.S.A. Facts

- The United States has paved enough roads to circle the Earth over 150 times.

- Honolulu is the only place in the United States that has a royal palace.

**And...**Whether you are thinking of buying, selling, or financing real estate, stop by and say "hi", I'd love to hear from you...

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References:-aracontent.com,  
copyright 1996-2009, ARAcontent-  
<http://www.bls.gov/eag/eag.us.htm>  
Google.com  
Usacitiesonline.com  
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## Upgrade your summer with an Upgrade your summer with an outdoor living do-it-yourself project

(ARA) - Nothing says warm weather quite like backyard barbecues and pool parties. But if your outdoor living space doesn't quite make the grade, you might consider building a dream deck with your own two hands. Do-it-yourselfers not only save money in labor costs, but they also reap the pride and satisfaction of improving and adding value to their homes.

Check out these tips from the outdoor living experts at Trex to ensure your DIY deck project will earn neighborhood bragging rights.

**Assess your skills** - Before getting started, make sure that you're confident in your ability to design, plan and build a dream deck on your own. Consider the amount of time you have to commit to the project, whether or not you're in adequate physical shape to handle the materials, your access to necessary tools (such as a circular saw, framing square, wheelbarrow and socket wrench) and if you'll be able to count on help from family and friends.

**Research necessary permits** - Contact state, county or city offices to determine what specific permits are needed for your project. Remember that some permits may take longer to obtain than others - especially during the peak spring and summer home improvement months - and build this approval process into your project timeline. Also, consider the costs associated with necessary permits and be prepared to pay a small fee.

**Choose the right materials** - When planning a do-it-yourself deck project, select wood-alternative materials that will look like new even after years of heavy foot traffic and severe weather. Trex Enhance high-performance decking in Clam Shell (a deep charcoal) and Beach Dune (a warm, honey brown) offers all the charm and none of the trouble of real wood - at a value. Combining superior durability, wear-resistance and long-lasting good looks, Trex Enhance is also extremely low-maintenance and manufactured from 95 percent recycled content. In fact, spills wash off easily with just soap and water, and the collection is backed by a 20-year limited residential fade and stain warranty.

For more do-it-yourself tips and product information, visit [www.trex.com](http://www.trex.com).

-Courtesy of ARA Content-